

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T CONAKRY 0718

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PEPR, EAID, MASS, GV, SA
SUBJECT: SEKOU TOURE AND THE SAUDIS

1. LOCAL ARAB DIPLOMATS REPORT GUINEAN PRESIDENT SEKOU TOURE IS PREPARING TRIP TO VARIOUS ARAB COUNTRIES, LIBYA POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS APRIL 17-18, AND PERHPAS IRAQ AND GULF STATES. GOG HAS REPORTEDLY ASKED FOR SAUDI AGREEMENT TO A VISIT APRIL 20. THIS COMES BETWEEN TWO OTHER STATE VISITS AND WOULD REPRESENT A HEAVY LOAD ON SAG, BUT SAUDI CHARGE REPORTS APRIL 20 AND 21 ARE FREE AND BELIEVES THERE IS CHANCE SAG MAY AGREE.

2. TRIP NOW APPARENTLY TAKING SHAPE APPEARS PART OF TOURE'S NEW OUTWARD LOOKING POLICY, DESIGNED TO FOSTER ELDER STATESMAN IMAGE AND TO SEEK GREATER FOREIGN ASSISTANCE FROM THE WEST AND NONCOMMUNIST COUNTRIES. TRIP WOULD TAKE PLACE AT A TIME WHEN SEKOU TOURE,

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SECRET

PAGE 02 CONAKR 00718 111659Z

UNDER PRESSURE FROM MARKET WOMEN'S RIOT OF LAST AUGUST, HAS BACKED OFF FROM EXTREME SOCIALIST POSITION ON TRADING AND SUPPLY POLICY, WHEN HE HAS INITIATED RECONCILIATION WITH LONG STANDING OPPONENTS SENEGAL AND IVORY COAST, WHEN HE HAS RELEASED A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND APPEARS ON VERGE OF RELEASING MORE AND FURTHER RELAXING

DOMESTIC ATMOSPHERE IN GUINEA, AND WHEN STILL-CONSIDERABLE
SOVIET POSITION IN GUINEA HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT ERODED
AND APPEARS ON THE DOWNGRADE.

3. SEKOU TOURE'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA COULD BE OF
PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE, CEMENTING WHAT HAS INCREASINGLY
COME TO APPEAR A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF NATIONAL
ORIENTATION. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT TOURE CAN OR WILL
ABANDON HIS UNIQUE SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY. HOWEVER, VERBAL
REITERATION OF DOGMA IS NOW ACCOMPANIED BY AN UNDER-
CURRENT OF PRAGMATISM THAT COULD OPEN THE WAY TO CLOSER
WESTERN TIES AND MORE EFFICIENT APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT
OF GUINEA'S VERY SUBSTANTIAL NATURAL RESOURCES. GUINEA
IS GREATLY INTERESTED IN SAUDI FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN
BAUXITE PRODUCTION, DAM CONSTRUCTION, BOEING AIRCRAFT
PURCHASE, PURCHASE OF OIL PRODUCTS AND OTHER INTERESTS.
IN LIGHT OF ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES, (A) WE BELIEVE IT IS
IN US AND SAUDI INTEREST THAT SAUDI ARABIA GIVE
SEKOU TOURE A WARM WELCOME AND BE REASONABLY
RESPONSIVE TO HIS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE AND (B) WE
SEE THIS AS OPPORTUNITY TO EXTRACT SIGNIFICANT QUID
PRO QUO IN TERMS OF A MORE FULLY NONALIGNED GUINEAN
POSITION, INCLUDING REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF
SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN CONAKRY. GOG HAS RECENTLY
HINTED THAT USG PROVISION OF COASTAL PATROL BOATS
MIGHT OBTAIN NEED FOR SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE; THUS
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PAGE 03 CONAKR 00718 111659Z

APPEARS ALREADY INCLINED IN THAT DIRECTION, AND A PUSH
FROM SAUDI ARABIA, POSSIBLY IN THE FORM
OF FINANCING PATROL CRAFT, MIGHT DO THE TRICK. IN
ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AND
PSYCHOLOGICALLY FAVORABLE TIME FOR SAUDI ARABIA TO
SEEK GREATER GUINEAN NONALIGNMENT IN EXCHANGE FOR
ANY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTED.

4. IF DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES NO OBJECTION, EMBASSY
JIDDA MIGHT USEFULLY DISCUSS POSSIBLE TOURE VISIT IN
THESE TERMS WITH APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL, DISCREET
SAUDI LEADER. SEKOU TOURE IS ADMITTEDLY VOLATILE
AND SUBJECT TO ZIGS AND ZAGS, YET NEVER IN THIS
DECADE HAS THE MOMENT SEEMED SO PROPITIOUS FOR SAUDI
AID, PUT IN A CORRECT POLITICAL/STRATEGIC CONTEXT,
TO HAVE SUCH A CONSTRUCTIVE IMPACT ON GOG ORIENTATION.
CROSBY

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